

Ask Your MLA



Shirley Bond MLA, Prince George-Mt. Robson

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February 22, 2008

Hello Everyone,

This week 20 of my colleagues and I attended a breakfast in Victoria to help raise awareness of the CNIB and its programs. The breakfast was organized by our very own Brad Waghorn from Prince George. Brad is the Regional Manager for the CNIB and his area covers from 70 Mile House to the Yukon border and from the Queen Charlotte Islands to Valemount and everything in between. Brad has worked tirelessly to provide services and support to those dealing with blindness and vision loss. Last year, the Prince George Visions Lunch was a huge success and we're hoping for an even bigger turn out this year. This year's Visions Lunch will be on April 18, 2008. Please see the CNIB's website at www.cnib.ca or call Brad at 563-1702 for details on this year's lunch and to buy tickets.

Recently I heard of an amazing story involving some students in Nova Scotia. A new student at a high school in Nova Scotia was bullied after wearing a pink t-shirt on his first day of school. After hearing about this, two grade 12 students were upset and decided to do something about it. They organized a day where everyone in the school was to wear a pink shirt or something pink to show support for the bullied student. These two students put the word out, provided as many pink t-shirts as they could and sent

government.

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Useful Phone numbers

BC Nurse line: 24 hour,
Toll free 1-866-215-4700

Pharma Net Hotline: Mon-Fri
(8:30-4:30pm) 1-800-387-4700

Health Info Line: Mon-Fri
(8:30-4:30pm) 1-800-465-4911

Victim Link: 7 days a week,
24 hours, 1-800-563-0808

a very powerful message. I am proud to say that we are following their example and encouraging everyone in the Province to wear pink on February 27 as a show of support for anti-bullying. The students at DP Todd Secondary and Duchess Park have told me that they are taking this challenge as well and trying to have as many students as possible show up at school wearing pink on February 27. I am so proud of our students and will be providing a prize to each school for a participant draw. We need to work together to send a strong message that bullying simply won't be tolerated.

This week of course we presented our budget for 2008. Budget week is always an exciting time in the Legislature. We dissect every piece and page of the budget in Victoria, but everyone else in the Province ends up only hearing of the big ticket items like the carbon tax and health care spending. I think it is important for every British Columbian to understand just how the budget and its initiatives will affect them in their daily lives. So, every week in your AYMLA newsletter you will get a couple of 'budget nuggets'. This is where we will highlight aspects of the budget that will affect you in your day-to-day life and we will tell you how they might affect you.

This week, I decided to focus on the carbon tax. Those seem to be the two words on everyone's lips these days. But what does it really mean for you on a day-to-day basis? Well, the tax will not be introduced until July 1, 2008. When it is introduced the tax will translate as 2.41 cents more per litre of gasoline that you buy and 2.76 cents per litre of diesel. For example, if you fill up your 50 litre tank every week you will be spending an extra \$1.20 per week. This translates to approximately an extra \$4.80 per month or \$62 per year.

As Minister Taylor said in the budget speech, every penny that is raised from the carbon tax will, by legislation, go back to British Columbians in the form of personal income tax cuts. That brings me to the second 'budget nugget' for the week. In this year's budget we also committed to a personal income tax reduction for 2008 and 2009. In 2008 your personal

income tax will be 2% less and in 2009 it will be 5% less on the first \$70,000 you make. Let me give you an example. If you make \$50,000 per year, you will get to keep an extra \$51 in 2008 and an extra \$134 in 2009. If you make \$70,000 per year you will keep an extra \$85 in 2008 and \$224 in 2009.

If you haven't attended a Can Spell event why not plan to attend the upcoming one in Prince George next weekend. This event will bring together all of the spelling bee winners from schools in the district. I would like to wish all of the participants good luck and great spelling and I look forward to cheering you on!

Have a wonderful and safe weekend and don't forget to get out your best pink item to wear on Wednesday.

Until next week,

Shirley

Question of the week:

WHAT PROGRAM WILL HELP COMMUNITIES ADDRESS EXISTING FLOOD CONCERNS?

Forty flood protection projects in various communities across the province are now underway under the first phase of the 10-year, \$100-million British Columbia Flood Protection Program. This funding will help communities address existing flood concerns and adapt to the real and growing threat of increased flooding related to climate change. By doing this work now, the province is taking proactive steps to prevent emergencies rather than just responding to them.

Communities on Vancouver Island and from the Fraser Valley to the Bulkley Valley are benefiting from a wide variety of mitigation projects, including:

- new flood protection structures like a flood water debris trap on Buck Creek near Houston;
- improvements to existing infrastructure, such as adding large rocks to armour the bank of Toby Creek near Invermere;
- gravel and sediment removal projects on the Bear

River near Stewart and the Kicking Horse
River near Golden; and

- flood plain management planning, such as the flood risk-analysis study in Prince George.

Eligible costs under the multi-year program include design and engineering work, materials and labour. Program funding for 2007/08 is now fully allocated and projects are expected to be completed by March 31, 2008. A formal call for project applications for 2008/09 will go to local governments in the coming months.

The Province and local governments have identified flood protection as a priority, and the government is acting now to reduce the flood risk in our communities. This is a partnership program, and all levels of government involved will have a role in its success. To that end, we will continue to work to bring Ottawa on-board as a contributor to this program.

The Province selected flood protection projects to fund in fiscal 2007/08 from two sources. In spring 2007, a call for urgent flood protection projects drew applications from local governments. After the spring flood event, local governments and provincial staff identified other urgent projects in areas with historic flooding issues or new, emerging flood threats. All municipal governments, regional districts, diking districts and electoral areas may apply for funding under the British Columbia Flood Protection Program to build new flood protection works or improve existing ones. Ongoing management, operation and maintenance of new or existing flood protection works remain the responsibility of the local authority.

News Around the Province

NEW GATEWAY VISITOR CENTRE TO WELCOME GUESTS TO B.C.

International visitors to British Columbia will enjoy top level service and information in the brand new Peace Arch Gateway Visitors Centre starting in February 2009. The new \$4.6-million building design was

unveiled during an address to the Council of Tourism Associations' annual conference in Vancouver. Most of the 4,800-square-foot space – 85 per cent – will be public space. Special features include a theatre, currency exchange service and flags of B.C.'s neighbours, Washington, Oregon and California. Construction of new Gateway Visitor Centres will further promote summer and winter destinations across B.C., helping to build an even stronger B.C. tourism industry and provincial economy. This centre is a fitting first introduction to the wide range of tourism and cultural experiences B.C. has to offer guests from the United States.

The Peace Arch Gateway Visitors Centre is designed after a First Nations Semiahmoo winter dwelling. From the air, the footprint of the building is based on one of B.C.'s Gulf Islands. Features will include structural and decorative indigenous forest elements featuring B.C. tree species, mountains and rivers. It will be built to LEED Gold standards.

The improved Gateway Visitor Centres have a tangible economic benefit. Based on interviews with travelers, we know that having a visitors centre prompts tourists to stay longer and make return trips, thus leveraging B.C.'s assets to their greatest advantage. The Peace Arch Centre is a key link to British Columbia as a world-class destination. Across the province, our Gateway Visitor Centres are providing a welcoming, informative first stop for visitors entering B.C. This new centre will not only showcase what B.C. has to offer to some of the millions of visitors who come here, but the building itself becomes part of our message.

Tourism British Columbia currently operates six provincial gateway visitor information centres: Peace Arch Border Crossing, Vancouver International Airport (domestic and international), Mt. Robson Provincial Park, Osoyoos, Golden and Coquihalla (Merritt). The centres offer highly trained, professional counsellors, state of the art technology, reservations, ticketing and retail opportunities including Super, Natural British Columbia products, currency exchange, food and beverage, and rest room facilities.

This week's bouquet of recognition goes to...

*Canada's National Sledge team!
Best of luck with your competition this weekend!*

Community Announcements

*Positive Living North (PLN) is looking to the community to assist in donating **shoes and socks**. With the warmer weather upon us the snow will soon be melting and leaving the street and sidewalks very wet. Our members are in need of dry shoes and socks to prevent infection. With your help people living with HIV/AIDS will have one less health concern and PLN will be able to promote a healthy and hygienic environment. We would like to thank you for your help. We need both women's and men's shoes... **donation can be dropped off at 1563 2nd Ave.***

Mark your calendar...

- ❖ Feb 22-Mr. Prince George Pageant at the Ramada Hotel 7:30 PM Tickets \$30 for more info call 564-3737
- ❖ Feb 22 – Sledge Hockey- 12:00pm – Kin 1, Saturday Feb 23, 7:00pm CN Centre.
- ❖ Feb 23-24 -Pineview SnowFrolics – Pancake breakfast 7am to 11am at Pineview Hall.– kids games, sleigh rides, come out and join the fun.
- ❖ Feb 23-Wildgame Banquet & Fundraiser, at PG Civic Centre. Tickets available at Northern Hardware, Northern Troutfitters, and Hobby Brews, \$40 for more info call 962-6455
- ❖ Feb 24 – the Seniors Fun Fair at the Hart Pioneer “Centre from 10AM to 5PM Free admission with food at minimal cost.
- ❖ Feb 25- Toastmasters demonstration

meeting at the Civic Centre – 855 Dominion St, 2nd Floor. 7:30PM – 9:30PM

- ❖ Feb 27 - United Way launches forestry support seminars at the Civic Centre 7-9pm for more info call Jocelyn Snih at 561-1040
- ❖ Mar 1-Dunster Community Association Mid Winter Buy and Sell- 11AM -2PM at Dunster Community Hall, Silent Auction, White Elephant, Bake Table-For more info 968-4334
- ❖ Mar 1 – Can West Can Spell National Spelling Bee 2008 at Vanier Hall. More info to come....
- ❖ Mar 4-6 Vision Loss workshop- CNIB -490 Quebec St. For info call Sharon-563-1702
- ❖ Mar 7-9 – The Rainbow singers and musical friends present Musical Eastcoast Kitchen Party at ECRA, Admin: \$10

If you are a non profit organization and would like to advertise an upcoming event or share a story please email [Shirley](#)

Thank you for taking the time to read my newsletter. If you would like to see something specific in the next edition of Ask Your MLA, please [email me](#). If you know someone who would like to receive our newsletter, email their name so we can add them to our list.



My second e-newsletter, People, Places & Projects showcases great people and projects in our area. To subscribe to People, Places & Projects, [click here](#). To read past editions to go: [People, Places & Projects online](#).

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